DENAHY, William J.

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(dated) 2/3/82

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General Topic of Interview Irish in West Oakland

Date Sept. 9, 1982 Place Kerry House Length 1½ hours

Narrator	Interviewer
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Name & address of relative, friend N/A	Relationship to narrator [friend, neighbor, etc.] N/A
Birthplace OAKLAND CA	Length of acquaintance N/A
Birthdate 2/14/26	Occasion of interview N/A
Occupation(s) SALOON KEEPER	

Interview Data

Subjects covered, in approximate order, spelling out names of persons and places mentioned

Estimated Time on Tape	Contents

Use back of sheet if necessary

Denahy

Oakland Neighborhood History Project

Interview with Denahy

Date of Interview: September 3, 1981

Interviewers: Kathryn Hughes, Padraigin McKillicuddy and Pamela Morton, and Sally Thomas

Transcriber: Sally Thomas

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Notes and Partial Transcription:

0-5 minutes | 0-50 counter

Born in Oakland at the Old Providence Hospital, in February of 1926. Father born in San Francisco in 1876. Mother from Minnesota. Her maiden name was Bradley. His grandfather born in Carsaiwin (?) County, Kerry. (Padraigin was born there, too.)

Conner Memorial Church.

Left Ireland in 1850. He was born in 1828. He left in the potato famine days. Came across from Liverpool to New York, then across the Isthmus of Panama, then arrived in San Francisco in 1851. Went to work in the gold fields near Grass Valley for seven or eight years. His first wife died in a plague or something like that.

Then he came back down to San Francisco and married his second wife, Denehy's paternal grandmother, Mary Cullan. She worked as a chambermaid in the Old Palace Hotel in S.F. That's where Denehy's oldest uncle was born, in 1862. There were five kids in the family. Denehy's dad was the fourth youngest one, born in 1876.

Grandfather, after making a stake in the gold fields, bought an old ranch, a "three-mile house" on Mission Road

in San Francisco. He stayed there 3 or 4 years. Then he got a job with "Old Man Chabot" who had the water company in the East Bay. He worked at the famous old earthen dam.

Deneheg: "What they used to do, they had all these old Irishmen with a horse-drawn dump truck, and they'd fill it with dirt. Then they'd dump it along this dam. Then they had these Spanish cowboys with the wild mustangs, and at night, they put a corral in there, and they'd put the horses in there, and the horses would tamp the earth down at night. They'd holler and yell and make the horses move around and tamp the earth down. That's very famous the way that dam was built up there.

McGillicuddy: What years was that?

Deneheg: That would be in the 1870s, 1876, '77. They moved over about 1876. In fact the old family home has been in the family for 106 years now. The old family home was at 120 Adeline Street. At the turn of the century in 1909, Moore and Scott came over to open a ship yard there. My family moved, it was a little upward mobility, they moved from 1st up to 5th and 6th and Adeline. Then my dad opened it as a bar and operated it during World War I. Then he closed it during the prohibition days. He was "in" politically, so he got a job as a health inspector in the city of Oakland. Then he re-opened it, in 1933 with the repeal. He operated it until he died in 1945.

5-10 minutes | 50-100 counter

Hughes: You told me it was called "Snug Harbor Bar."

Deneheg: Right.

McGillicuddy: Chabot - was that a French name?

Denehey: It could be either French or English.
Hughes: Do you know if other Irish worked on it?
Denehey: Oh, yes. That's what it was. That was a typical job. Most all of them were doing that type of work. I've heard my dad and my uncles telling me about the old grandfather — he had the old horse-drawn dump cart he used to bring down with the horses. He used to put them behind the house when he went to work. I think he used to go up there for two or three days at a time, and camp out there. Because that was way out of town in that era.
McGillicuddy: So this was before your father opened up the bar.
Denehey: Oh, yes. He was just a child at the time. . . . After the dam was finished he went to work for the water company, and worked for them until he retired in the 1890s.
McGillicuddy: Did your grandfather ever work for the railroad?
Denehey: No.
McGillicuddy: He made enough at the gold mine?
Denehey: That's right. That's where he originally made his first stake up there. He owned a little property on Clementina Street in San Francisco. Then he bought this ranch out in the Old Mission Road, out by what they called Saint Mary's Park. It was the original site of St. Mary's College when Bishop Alemeny first opened St. Mary's College. It was the suburban area of S.F. in that era. This is what we would call today the outer Mission.
Hughes: Why the move to West Oakland? What brought your family?
Denehey: He had this offer to work for Chabot. That was a good job in those days.
Hughes: They lived in West Oakland because that was the main town?

Deneheg: [redacted] That's where town was! That was the whole town in those days. My uncle, when he was a boy, used to pasture milk cows for Old Mrs. Morran (?) I've heard my dad, even as a boy, talk, when the rich people lived out on Lake Merrit. That was way out in the suburbs, the Schilling (?) family, and some of the old homes. The College of the Holy Names was a suburban campus in those days. That was a big trip when they were kids, when they went way out there. There was the old (Tall Street) Dam where the auditorium is, there was a tidal area there, where the water used to come up from the bay. They used to have a railway trestle that went across. I heard my dad tell me when they were kids they used to go up there and play around. A lot of the old sailing ships used to tie up. When you come up the stairs (at the Keary House) there's a picture of the old Brooklyn Basin. That was the old harbor of Oakland. In fact I go to a fellow that does [redacted] silk-screening for these t-shirts and stuff we sell, and he's right across the street from the old County Courthouse, is still standing out there. It's on East 12th and 8th or 9th Avenue. That was Brooklyn. That's one of the oldest sections of Oakland, too. Down there along the waterfront area.

Hughes: Did you ever hear your dad talk about neighbors you had?

[redacted] 100-155 counter

Deneheg: Oh yeah. There was a lot of Irish around in our area at that time. Right behind us was the Murphy family, [redacted] Very famous. One of the sons was a police sargeant here, Gene Murphy. Typical of the

Denehy, cont: Irish families, one brother was a railroad engineer. A lot of the fellows worked on the railroad, too, because the yards were right down there. My dad worked on the railroad, too. Then he went on a strike — the '94 or '96 famous railroad strike. He had joined the switchermans union, and after the strike was over they black-balled those fellows. There was a West Oakland political boss by the name of Mike Kelley, a very famous political boss. He was a very close friend. My dad as a young boy worked for Mike. Mike came out from Wheeling (?), West Virginia. He was a nailer. They had a cast nailing at the foot of Webster Street where they made nails. In those days they weren't wire nails, they were cast nails. There was a nailer who made these moulds, and then there was what you call a "picker." My dad went to the third grade at the Old Saint Mary's school. At that time he said that the Christian brothers told him, "You better go out and earn a living," which was typical of all those old families in those days. He went to work at the nailworks as a picker. Mike Kelley was his nailer. He and Mike became very close friends. He was kind of a ward-heeler (?) all those years for Mike.

McGilliuddy: When was this?

Denehey: This would have been, I would say, about 1890. Because my dad was maybe ten or eleven, something like that when they first went to work. Those kids went to about the third grade.

McGilliuddy: You mentioned that your father was a health inspector because he had some political "in." Then

you mentioned Mike Kelley as a political boss. We've been told that the Irish didn't have that much political clout in Oakland, certainly not as much as they did in San Francisco. Would you say that was true?

Denehy: People always say, "You're an Irish Catholic. So how come you're not a Democrat?" We were always Republicans

Hughes: Your family. How about the others?

Denehy: Most of them were in West Oakland because Mike Kelley was a Republican. In those days if somebody needed a job, if some kid got out of school, or got kicked out of school, the old mother would come down to my dad and say, "Timmy needs a job." Well, they'd either go to see some guy and get him on the railroad or they'd get him some kind of a city job — a policeman's job, or a fireman's job. Mike Kelley — I guess the only real government position he had, he was the superintendant of the docks over in San Francisco. That was the state-owned docks. The state owned all the wharfage in San Francisco. All the maintenance men, the carpenters that repaired them were all political appointees of Mike.

Mike was kind of always at odds when Joe Knowland (?) first became a power in Republican politics. Mike had a lot of control. There are some great stories . . . Some of those Irish. One of the greatest ones, a typical story of these old people — My family were all from Old St. Mary's parish. A little further west was Father McNally, had St. Patrick's. There was a fellow who late became a supervisor in Alameda County,

Denehy, cont: Johnny Mullens. Well, Johnny Mullens and my dad's younger brother, 2 years younger, well, Johnny Mullens got kicked out of St. Patrick's for raising hell, so his mother sent him off to Old Saint Mary's. He and my uncle used to sit in the same seat in school. Well Johnny late got on up, and he was a pretty good politician. He was a protogé of Mike Kelley. He was an insurance guy, and he got up, and made county supervisor. This was back in the early '20s. Ezra Dacota was the district attorney in Alameda County. Some old judge died, and they appointed Ezra Dacota to the superior court bench. I don't know if C.C. Youngs or Hairem (?) Johnson was governor in those days. There was a fellow, he was an Irish guy, he was the chief deputy attorney in Alameda County. Just at that time the Knowlands had taken over the control of the Tribune from the Dargee (?) family. They controlled so many seats on the Board of Supervisors, and Mike had a couple of guys. Mullens, naturally, was his man. This other fella was supposed to be appointed the district attorney. He had the seniority. Mullens was the deciding vote on it. Mike said, "Mullens, (!) wants you to vote for this fella, he's one of our boys." Mullens flipped — Joe Knowland got to him, he said, "I'll do this for you and that for you; I've got another guy I want you to appoint, instead. His name is Earl Warren." That's how Earl Warren became the district attorney. That was the kinchpin (?) to his whole political career. I'll say this for Earl Warren: Earl Warren never forgot Johnny Mullens. Whenever [illegible] come he would

15-20 minutes | 155-215 counter

to Oakland, even when Mullens was an old man in his eighties, and Warren was Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, he would always go and see Mullens.

McGillicuddy: So Mullens bolted the Kelley camp.

Denehy: I'll tell you the aftermath of that story. He bolted the Kelley camp, and Mike put the kiss of death on him. He was raised with my family — he used to write all the insurance for the family — Mike he says, "He's through." Johnny come to renew the policy, my uncle's, my dad's, "Sorry, John. We like you and all that, but nothin'."

In fact Johnny Mullens never wrote another policy until about 1940 or 1939, Mike finally died. When Mike died my dad gave him back the insurance.

McGillicuddy: It would be true to say that they were Republicans more because of this patriarchal patronage . . .

Denehy: Certainly. It was patronage — who could do the most for you. The heck — you'd be a communist if the Communists were in power and were gettin' you a job. In those days it was tough to get a job. You went to Mike for everything — You needed a job or your sidewalk was cracked in front of your house, and you wanted the city to come and fix it. You went to see Mike.

McGillicuddy: Has anybody done any studies on him?

Denehy: I don't know of anybody. People say, "How do you know this stuff?" Well, the strange thing is, and typical of Irish families, my grandfather was born in 1828. He was 48 when my father was born. My father was 50 when I was born. So in three generations we go back 150 years or better. You'd hear these stories they told as a kid about these

fellas. Of course being around a saloon my dad knew all these old politicians, the State Board of Equalization members — they controlled the liquor in California for years. Fred Stewart and Jim Quinn and fellas, were great friends of my dad. All these old-timers. Of course you heard all the political stories from those fellas.

So people would ask, "How come you weren't Democrat?" Listen, the Democrats couldn't do anything for you. The Democrats weren't in power. You know, in California, there's only been three Democratic governors in the history of the state of California — The two Browns, and a guy by the name of Jimmy Budd way back in 1910 or something like that. The power base in California was always republican.

McKillicuddy: The Democrats did a lot of infighting, I'm discovering in my research.

Deneky. They're even doing it today. They're always that way.

Hughes: So Mike Kelley became a republican because that was the thing to be.

Deneky: They were the power. There was another old fella that had a bar up on 7th and West Grove by the name of Johnny Cox: That was the neighborhood bar in West Oakland back in the '80s and '90s. If you needed a job you saw Mike. Mike became the power in politics.

They always tell the story, Mike used to sit in the chair in the lobby of Hotel Oakland and dispense patronage. My dad always used to say, the last recourse they used to come to my dad because they knew my dad really had his ear. He'd say, "So and so needs a job or something." "Did he ever do anything for us?" (laughter) "Well, he's a pretty good guy."

20-25 minutes | 215-275 counter

I know the family." "I'll see what I can do." If he said that he knew that he'd be taken care of.

McKillicuddy: Did he dispense this patronage across ethnic lines?

Denehy: Sure. [redacted] The Portuguese and a lot of the Italians came in just a little bit behind the Irish in West Oakland. Some of my family's oldest and closest friends — the Touris [redacted], the Cerugino's (?), the McClouds — people like that were in the neighborhood. I can remember there was a great old contractor, he built the courthouse and Merritt Hospital, Frank Nelly. He was a second generation Irish. He became a very prominent contractor. This one old friend of ours [redacted] name was Atto Cerugino [redacted] (?) he got in a fight with him and quit. He came down to the bar. (My dad) called up Mike — the next day he got a job. He worked for forty years at repairing the docks in San Francisco. Every election time when Mike had a couple of candidates, he was running for something, Cerugino (?) would go down to someplace, and in those days they'd make the wooden signs. That was his job, he'd make the signs. If you received a favor there was a time when he'd come to you for something else to help out. There was always that type of thing. It went across ethnic lines. I mean, there were Portuguese, a lot of Italian families, the [redacted] Basso family was a great old family down there.

McKillicuddy: Were there many blacks in Oakland at this time?

Denehy: Very few. There was a famous black gambler — Tom Cheek[redacted] (?) way down in West Oakland. The only blacks in those days were the Pullman Porters. There was very few. Like [redacted] anything else they didn't have an entrée to everything, but they were accepted. They were segregated — they all lived

Denehy, cont: down around Railroad Avenue, by the S.P. shops. They'd come in the bar. My uncle used to tell about this Tom Cheeky, a Negro gambler, run a Crap game down there. Every Saint Patrick's Day he'd always wear the green. He'd always come in and have a drink in the place. They liked these fellas — there wasn't any animosity. In those days they were accepted. Of course they knew their limits. In those days it was a different world. They probably were better accepted out here than they were anyplace else. They certainly weren't mistreated.

McGillicuddy: Were you here when a large influx of the Blacks and the Okies and Arkies came in World War II? Was that very unsettling socially?

Denehy: It wasn't originally. They knew they had to get a hold of these people. They sent trains down to the South and brought the blacks from Louisiana and Alabama and those places. They were, as they say, a different breed of blacks. The old-line blacks assimilated to a certain sense: they had more middle-class values. These poor blacks from the South had been pickin' cotton.

McGillicuddy: Were there a lot of poor whites that came up at that time, too?

Denehy: They weren't exactly poor whites. A lot of Okies came out here. Everybody came out here because this is where the jobs were. That was big money in the shipyard days. I look back on some of those Okies — a lot of them have done very well. It was from the tail end of the exodus from the dustbowls.

McGillicuddy: Where did they settle?

Denehy: The federal government built a lot of housing for them down in West Oakland. Some of them

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are still existing, around 7th and 8th and Cypress. They built a lot of stuff in Richmond — a lot of that has been torn down.

McKillicuddy: Who was running the city at that time.

Denehy: The Knowlands. When Mike died in 1939 they had virtual control of the city.

Hughes: I wanted to get back to those two parishes you mentioned — Father McNally's and yours.

Denehy: Father Dempsey was at Old Saint Mary's parish.

Hughes: Did they grow up to serve two different little Irish neighborhoods?

Denehy: No... if you're familiar they're maybe twenty blocks apart. And then there was St. Anthony's out in East Oakland. St. Francis de Sales was built later. I'm talking at the turn of the century maybe, were those. Then Father Serda came and built Sacred Heart Parish. St. Anthony's, which was in the old Brooklyn area, that, and Saint Patrick's and St. Mary's were the three oldest ones. Then they late built a Portugese Church called St. Joseph's on Chestnut, between 7th and 8th. It was an (ethnic) church, it wasn't a parish, but it was for the Portugese-speaking population.

Morton: You attended St. Mary's because it was closer?

Denehy: I didn't, but my family did, yeah. That was their parish. I forget where the parish lines were, but on the East side of Adeline Street was Old St. Mary's Parish.

McKillicuddy: When did your family leave West Oakland?

Denehy: My family lived at 1st and Adeline til about 1904 or '05. Just three blocks up they bought a house between 5th and 7th. I know I've heard

my dad tell me about living there during the earthquake and fire. Have you ever seen that old Gloveworks there — Wickman Gloves? It's right on 7th, off Adeline. There's a brick building. There's a famous old building, they call it the Glore Building now. It's been kind of renovated. It was one of the first brick buildings around in that area. It had been built, I think, in 1905, and when the earthquake came the back of the building fell down. It was one of the few buildings that had structural damage over here in Oakland. A few things were cracked. It wasn't bad.

Hughes: What did they do in that building, originally?

Deneby: It was a gloveworks. They made work gloves.

McGillicuddy: So he moved up there. Did he die there?

Deneby: My grandfather and grandmother died there. The family lived there until about 1923. I had a maiden aunt and uncle who lived there. They finally moved out in Walla Vista, which is off Lakeshore, in the early '20s. By that time my father had married and we lived on Lakeshore, too.

Hughes: Was your first house on Adeline rented?

Deneby: No, he owned it. They owned the second one, too. I don't think they built it. There's a lot of old Irish families — the MacGuinness family, the judge Bill MacGuinness, he lived right across the street between 5th and 7th.

McGillicuddy: Was that fairly usual to own your own home in those days?

Deneby: I would think so, yes. We found the old deed for that. I think he bought it — the property and the house — for four or five hundred dollars.

Hughes: We interviewed many people from that area who said they rented.

Deneby: Probably, yes. A lot of them probably did. You look at my

grandfather, and he worked maybe eight or ten years in the goldfields to make a stake. Then he came down, bought this ranch, ranched it for awhile, then he sold that. In that time there's got to be a little upward mobility.

McKillicuddy: So you were actually born in this house on Adeline?

Denehy: No I was born in Providence Hospital.

McKillicuddy: Where was the family at that time when you were born?

30-35 minutes | 340-410 counter

Denehy: Up on Lakeshore by then. They moved up in the early '20s, about '23 or so.

McKillicuddy: Was that usual to be born in hospitals at that time?

Denehy: My sister and I were both born at Providence Hospital. Down where Kaiser Hospital is now, was Faviola (?) Hospital, an old "lying-in" hospital they used to call it. This is an interesting neighborhood here, too. The fella attending the bar for me down there, Al Higgins, was born and raised in this neighborhood. Those fellows have lived around here since the mid-60s.

Hughes: Are there a lot of Irish?

Denehy: There's a real mix up here — there's Irish and English... Everything up in this area. As I say, in West Oakland the Irish came, then the Italians came and the Portuguese came. Of course there were English and a few German families.

Hughes: And the Greeks.

Denehy: Yeah, they came a little later.

McKillicuddy: Did you stay in your father's house until you married?

Denehy: When I was first married I lived in the old family home on Lakeshore. Then I built another house in Oakland, up in Sunnyhills, by Saint James Wood.

Hughes: What do you know about the dispersal of the Irish from

Hughes, cont: West Oakland?

Denehy: I don't know. But I don't think there was an ethnic exodus. If you were lucky enough to get ahead in business or professions you moved up to Piedmont or up to Lakeshore. I can remember when I was a kid, typical of the Irish family, we'd catch the old street car, and every Sunday we'd go to mass down at Old St. Mary's, even though we were in Lady of Lourdes' parish. I went to the parochial school there, but my aunt would always take me down to the old parish. We'd always go to the "bartender's mass", 12:15. You'd see all the characters and all the politicians.

McKillicuddy: Why was that the "bartender's mass"?

Denehy: It was the last mass! The bartenders worked late on Saturday night, so that was the last mass, and you met all the characters there. It was great. After mass you'd see all these characters out there — the bail bond brokers, and everybody.

McKillicuddy: The Church remained a very integral part of your family?

Denehy: It always did, yeah.

McKillicuddy: For your children, too, would you say?

Denehy: Well... I guess. I only have one child, and he's in New York. I don't know. He still goes to the mass when we're back there, but when we're not there whether he does or not, I don't know. I couldn't say.

McKillicuddy: Does that make you feel sad?

Denehy: I guess so. I think it's always been a great thing in my family. I've heard stories about my grandfather, who I never knew. He was dead before I was born. He was a very religious man. He used to walk twenty miles in the goldfields on Saturday night, in Grass Valley,

or wherever it was, where they had mass. Then he'd walk back. He was a great old character. His nickname was "Uncle Dan" around West Oakland. When he got old, he used to go to mass every morning, but it was too far to walk from Adeline up to Jefferson, up to the Old St. Mary's, but the Portugnese church was open. So he used to go to the Portugnese church. Every morning he'd go to 7 o'clock mass. He had an old dog, and the old dog would follow him and would sit out in the vestibule. Old Uncle Dan would go into mass. The next person that came into mass, the dog would go right in the door. And he'd sit in the pew right behind him. When he came out, the old dog would follow him out. There are some great tales about him! Obviously he was a great character.

Typical of these old Irish, in fact there's an old family stained glass window, the Epiphany, on the side of Old St. Mary's Church — in the back on the right hand side. It was for the grandmother, in memory of her. But the old grandfather knew the old priest, there was originally Father King, Father Dempsey, and all these different priests that were there. He had a little money, and he'd buy a statue with a little flower, and he'd give a statue. Well, in those days, all these old people were buying these statues, and the priests had too many statues. So what he did, he gave this statue to St. Mary's church, then he went up one morning to mass, and, gee, he looks up in the Portugnese church... It's gone now, but the Portugnese church had more statues than St. Pete's or any place. The Portugnese are great for buying statues. This church was full of statues, and shrines, and all these things, and the old grandfather looked up, and there's

35-40 minutes | 410-500 counter

this statue. Well, the priest up at St. Mary's didn't have room for it, so he gave it to this Portugnese priest. He said, "Ah, gee." He was mad! He wouldn't talk to this priest at Old St. Mary's Church for the longest time. He was funny that way.

I think he died in his eighties, but anyway, he was retired for fifteen or twenty years. He was a great character. Every once in a while he used to take the street car and he'd go up town. He used to go all the way up here, there was a streetcar that went right up to Old St. Mary's Cemetary. All the bone yards up there at the end of Piedmont Avenue. So he'd go up there, and he had old Denine (?), an old Irish stone cutter on 40th and Grove. Anyway, he went up there and bought the plot, the perpetual chair, and he even had his headstone, a big headstone, still up there: Daniel MacIannenay (?), born Carsnipin (?), and all this stuff, member of the Ancient Order of the Hibernia, Knights of the Red Branch, he had all these emblems.

Hughes: He was a member?

Denehy: Oh, of course, he was. He had the shamrocks and all this thing. He had everything written on the stone except the date of death. He had that up there for about ten or twelve years until he died. He used to go up there every month and check it out, and see that all the weeds were cut around it. The father never knew anything about this for years. One day, somebody came back, and they saw old Mary, the grandmother, and they say, "We were up there for so-and-so's funeral, and we went over and said a prayer at your family's..." "We don't have a family..." "Oh, yeah," she says, "Denehy, I saw the sign."

Old Dan had come in, and Mary said, "What's this about a plot?" "Oh, well... yeah," he says, "I've got one up there. You know," he says, "when I die Jack will tell Dan to take care of it, and Dan will tell Bill, and Bill will tell Jerry. It will never be done. All they gotta do is just go down and tell Denine (?), and he'll cut the date of my death." So that was the type of character some of those guys were. But he was a deeply religious old guy.

McKillinddy: What were the women doing all this time?

Denehy: Working, I guess. Hell, in those days you had to wash on Mondays and things like that. My grandmother never worked after she had five kids.

McKillinddy: What about your mother?

Denehy: She worked when she first came here. She came from the East. She worked for Lenhart's Candy (?) Store, and that's when my dad married her. But, like the old grandmother, in those days, they had a vegetable garden and stuff like that. Typical of those Irish families, there were five in my family and only two married. My younger never had any children. There was the oldest daughter, Fan, who by the time she got to adulthood, it was terrible, in those days a woman didn't go out to work so easily.

McKillinddy: This is your sister?

Denehy: This is my aunt. She took care of the old folks. That was her kind of job. There were two bachelor brothers in those days, so she cooked for them. She was almost like a mother to them. She ran the household.

McKillinddy: Did the bachelor brothers ever marry?

Denehy: Never married. They lived with her.

McGillicuddy: So, in other words, they carried those old traditions of the old country.

Denehy: To a certain extent, yeah. There was a lot of great old families, the Foleys. They were interesting people.

McGillicuddy: Do you remember any of the things that your father had to tell you about the strike?

Denehy: Well, he remembers the strike, when they went out it was '94, and he was working. They were out for a long time. And then they were black-balled to a certain extent. You couldn't get your job back. That's when he went to Mike, and Mike had the juice, and got him a job. He became the night Superintendent of the State Belt Railroad in San Francisco. See, the state had a little railroad. They still do have a railroad that runs along the piers and Embarcadero. It's run by the state of California. Well, my dad went over there and worked there for ten or twelve or fifteen years. In fact, he was in the earthquake. In those days the ferry stopped running at one or two, and he used to stay in old railroad boarding house. Down in the house I have an old brass pitcher he used to break the door. He couldn't get his closet door open to get his suitcase out.

McGillicuddy: So he'd commute from here?

Denehy: Take the ferry, of course he had a pass. He'd take the 7th Street local down to the pier.

McGillicuddy: Then he would stay over there?

Denehy: He worked night shifts. They worked from four 'til about midnight. The last ferry had left, and he'd stay over there at night. Then he'd come back in the morning.

40 minutes | 500-590 counter

McKillicuddy: Do you have a lot of photographs and stuff from those times?

Denehy: The one you want to see is my sister. She's really the historian of the family. She'd be the one that could probably fill you in on a lot more.

McKillicuddy: Where is she now?

Denehy: She lives in San Mateo now. She works in San Francisco.

Hughes: It would be interesting to fill out your picture with hers.

Denehy: She would probably correct me. She'd tell, "Oh, no, he's all screwed up!" (laughter) She's really the family historian. She's even got pictures of my uncle and father in the Old Saint Mary's Grammar School, in the third grade. The little kids with the bows. It was an interesting town in those days.

I always get a kick out of the Jack London Square, and Jack London Lodge. All the old timers hated Jack London's guts. He was a complete jerk! No class — jerk. Johnny Hinehold, the fellow who educated him was an old saloon keeper at the foot of Webster, a great friend of my dad's. I remember as a little boy going to see Johnny Hinehold (?) all the time. A great guy.

McKillicuddy: He was Germán?

Denehy: Yeah, German. Jack London was originally a bum around West Oakland, an oyster (?) pirate. One or two of his sisters were prostitutes. He was an intelligent guy, went to the University of California and took some courses, and then he became a writer, you know. No question about it — he was a great writer. But when he got a little fame, he'd go into

some bar in the old kind of red-light, tenderloin district, which is right around 5th and 6th and Broadway, back before the fire and earthquake. He'd get drunk and raise hell, and the guy would throw him out. Then he'd call the police and say, "This man assaulted me." All the old saloon keepers and all the old timers around Oakland had no use for Jack London.

When he married that gal, and they took the Snark, and took a trip down the South Pacific, and he was crazy, and they had a bunch of square-head sailors and they were going to throw him overboard if it wasn't for the fact that he had his wife there. Then he went up to Glenale (?), and he was going to lumber eucalyptus.

McKilliwddy: What did they think about his [redacted] Socialist politics?

Deneby: That was taboo in those days. That wasn't what you'd call a Socialist strong-hold in those days. No, man, you were right down the middle in this town. This was a middle-of-the-road Republican town.

McKilliwddy: Was there more affluence here generally than there was in San Francisco?

Deneby: Well... in those days Piedmont was founded by the rich of San Francisco because the climate was better over here. Even before the earthquake.

Hughes: How many families would you say from West Oakland moved into Piedmont?

Deneby: I guess there were some. A lot of them moved up by Lakeshore where we were raised, which we used to call the "slums of Piedmont." We were a block or two from Piedmont. There was some that moved up there. But that was a lot of the wealthy

people of San Francisco. The Buller (?) family lived over there.

Hughes: I wanted to ask you about the clientele of your father's bar. Would that have been mixed social classes? Any working class people coming in?

Denehy: I would say mostly working class. Because it was a working class neighborhood. The people that lived in the neighborhood were naturally clientele. Seamen, the longshoremen, the waterfront people, shipyard workers.

Hughes: And the different ethnic groups?

45-97 minutes | 590-649 counter

Denehy: They would be everything. Square-heads, and...

McKillinddy: What's a "square-head"?

Denehy: That's any kind of a Scandinavian — a Dane, a Norwegian, a Swede. Square-head, you know. Box-head, square-head, they used to call them.

McKillinddy: What was the nick-name for the Irish?

Denehy: "Mics". "Degos", "Pisanos", "Portygees". They all had nick-names.

Hughes: You wouldn't be afraid to call someone that to his face?

Denehy: If you said it to them right. You knew them, these were guys that you knew.

Hughes: In terms of the neighborhood did kids whose parents made different amounts of money play together or hang out together?

Denehy: Well, in those days I think everybody was poor. There was a few — the people who lived way up [redacted] town, maybe. You'd hear talk about a few wealthy kids who went to the parochial school.

McKillinddy: You didn't go to parochial school?

Denehy: Oh, yeah, sure. All my family always did, and I always did. If you were really poor you went to the old

Tompkins school. That was the old public school at 3rd and Chestnut. A lot of the Catholic kids went there, too.

McGilliuddy: People weren't judged then by how much money they made.

Denehy: Well..... I don't know. That's kind of a generalization. If you lived in the neighborhood you knew everybody. I imagine the wealthier people lived out around the lake in those days. Most of the guys from West Oakland lived within a ten or fifteen block area.

McGilliuddy: What happened to those old neighborhoods. Do you regret their passing?

Denehy: With the influx of all the people in World War II... Up til World War II, that was really a Portuguese, Italian, still a lot of Irish that lived down in West Oakland.

Begin Side Two

0-5 minutes	0-50 counter	Discussion of Depression days. His family was upper-middle-class even during the Depression. Reform city manager — Ocean Carr (?) from Memphis, Tennessee. Going for morality type of city government. At odds with Mike. Cutting back during the Depression — said Denehy's father off as a health inspector in '32 or '33. Luckily went back into business at the bar.

Denehy: "I remember — I was just a kid, six, seven years old — I'd go down with my dad. I can remember the shipyards were going along very slow. In those days they had what they called a "shape up" every morning. All the fellows that worked in the shipyard would go down there. There was an old fellow by the name of Smith. He used to

say: "You, you, and you work, and the rest of you just go home." Those were tough days. A lot of people were out of work. I can remember when they were living down in Fruitvale, down there by the railroad yards [illegible], they used to live in what the called "Hoovervilles". They lived in these big cement pipes, kind of a hobo jungle. In fact that's when my dad was still a health inspector. He used to have to go down and inspect them. They had old cardboard things and big high sewer pipes — eight feet diameter pipes. "Pipe City." Those were tough times.

Hughes: Anything else you remember about the Depression in West Oakland? What they ate or where they shopped?

Denehy: Everybody went to the 6th Street Market or the 10th Street Market. I think Wednesdays and Saturdays. . . . There was a place you could buy groceries, you could go to a cheese shop, or a pork shop. Cornbeef Reilly (?) was the guy that had the place that sold cornbeef. There was an egg man there. It was quite an institution in those days. And there was a few little corner grocery stores down in West Oakland.

Hughes: My other question was 7th Street. What did you hear about the earliest characte of 7th Street? We've gotten various reports.

Denehy: It was the main drag that ran up to Broadway. I can remembe in those days you had to go up there to the bank — the Bank of America was on 7th Street. It was all business on 7th Street in those days.

Hughes: My interview with Senator Petris, in 1915 or 1920, part of it was known as "Greek Town." Do you remember any referance to that?

Denehy: I don't ever remember that. But there were Greek people around there. A lot of Slavonians down there,

PART II of Denahy interview

Denahy, cont: a big Slavonian colony. Old St. Patrick's had a lot of Slavonians. A lot of Italians. A lot of great ball players. Ernie Lombardi came out of there.

McKillicuddy: Did you follow the baseball games a lot?

Denahy: Oh, yeah. Everybody was a baseball fan. As kids we all played it. Old BayView Park which is now Ernie Raimondi — there was another great family. They were raised down in West Oakland. The Monzos. The Raimondis lived on Myrtle, between 3rd and 5th and Myrtle. There was a whole slew of them — Billy and Ernie and Doc. They're a little bit older than me.

5-10 minutes | 50-100 counter

Hughes: I wanted to ask you about 7th Street. Sally interviewed someone who said the Irish weren't allowed to go down to 7th Street. Maybe that's when it was becoming more like a red-light district.

Denahy: That's maybe later.

Hughes: Father McNally was mentioned as getting people off the streets.

Denahy: Those old Irish priests were really political powers, everything. In fact, McNally, before he came there had been over in a parish down on the Peninsula somewhere around Palo Alto, he was an intimate of Leland Stanford, president of Southern Pacific Railroad. In fact, Leland Stanford used to give him a horse every so many years. He had a little horse carriage, and he got a special horse. Leland Stanford's a great breeder of horses.

McKillicuddy: I think he was a protestant though.

Denahy: Oh yes, but [redacted] that had no...

McKillicuddy: It didn't make any difference?

Denahy: He got to know them. They all had protestant friends. There was no strict religious things like that. In fact he was a good friend of Leland Stanford. When he was the pastor at Old St. Mary's, there'd all be Irish gandy dancers, worked in the shops...

McKillicuddy: What is a "gandy dancer"?

Denahy: A gandy dancer is a man that tamps the ties when they lay the ties. Haven't you heard of the gandy dancer ball? In the railroad they all have nick-names. You know what a "hog-head" is? A hog-head is the engineer. In the old days, in the coal/oil burners they had a fireman. He was the "tallow pot" because he used to have a tallow pot and light the fires. The "puddle jumper" was the switchman. Do you what "Rule G" on the railroad is? That's when you got fired because you were drinkin'. That guy was rule g'd. In West Oakland they used to have these old rooming houses. There were a lot of "boomer" railroad workers in those days. They "boomered" around the country. They'd come in and they'd be a little short and they'd say, "Well I'm gonna get a job here on the S.P.," or something like that. "If you put me up I'll pay you the first pay day." The 10th and the 25th were the pay days. Some old Irish gal would be the landlord, "Where you from?" "Oh, I just came in from Pocatella, Idaho." She'd say, "Don't tell me. You're another Pocatella yardmaster." That was a term — the Oregon shortline ran up into Pocatella. Well, it was about 80 degrees below zero for about three months in Pocatella, so nobody lasted long on the Oregon shortline. If you stayed up there a month you'd have enough seniority you became yardmaster. So all these guys — "Where did you work?" — they'd say, "Well, I was a yardmaster in Pocatella, Idaho." They had all these terms like that.

To get back to Father McNally, some old Irish guy would get drunk or something, he wouldn't show up, and he'd lose his job. There was a fellow by the name of Mackenzie, and Mackenzie was the Superintendent of the S.P. of this division, and ran the shops down there. He was a protestant.

McGillicuddy: Scottish.

Denahy: Yes. So my dad said he had the big cheese cutter. Do you know what a "cheese cutter" is? That's the masonic emblem. So MacKenzie was the big guy with the cheese cutter. He was a good friend. Of course he knew that Leland Stanford was a buddy of McNally's. So Mary would come up and say, "Oh, Pat got fired" or something. ~~So old father Mackenzie~~. MacKenzie would come off the street car and walk down to the shops, and Father McNally would meet him on the corner. He'd walk down to the office with him, and the next day probably, old Pat would be back to work. He had the juice. They were a power like that. If you got in trouble on the railroad you went to see Father McNally and he'd get you your job back.

Hughes: He apparently opened some kind of after-school... was that what you were telling me?

Thomas: No, I think that was later. I don't think it was Father McNally. The woman I talked to said that 7th Street was "off limits" for her as a child.

Denahy: Well, way down there, maybe later. I can remember when Slim Jenkins had a black bar down there. That was more in the '20s and '30s. I wouldn't say it was off limits. They had a regular red-light district in Oakland back at the turn of the century. It was around 5th and 6th between Broadway and Washington. They had all the cribs in those days. Frisco Lynn (?) had a joint there. And Mae Davis was the famous madame.

10-15 minutes | 100-155 counter

McGillicuddy: Were they ostracized generally? Or was there intolerant eye cast on them?

Denahy: I don't know. That was way before my time. All my uncles at one time or another owned bars. They knew

those people. But I don't know how far they were ostracized.

There's another story, it goes to show you Hollywood glamorized people. "Great White Hope": Jack Johnson. Jack Johnson fought around here. I've got old pictures of Jack Johnson, [redacted] my uncle, Dempsey, all these kind of fellows. Dempsey and all those guys got [redacted] their start around here. They were great friends of my family. Jack Johnson came out here — he was kind of on the bum. He was ostracized because he was a black fighter, and he had married a white woman. When he got [redacted] out here the first thing he did, he put her in the crib. "Put her out", as they said. He did that all the time. But you don't see that in the movies.

There's a great old guy in Alameda, Ralph [redacted] Croll. They owned [redacted] (Croll) Gardens over on Webste Street in Alameda. He just sold it [redacted] the last few years. Ralph's in his eighties. They were great old friends of my family. His family had the old bar over there. It's [redacted] famous, one of these preservation buildings. Try to get a hold of Ralph [redacted] (Croll). He can tell you a lot about old Alameda and the fighters. Joe Ganz (?) was a lightweight champion. Dempsey and Jack Johnson worked out there. And Rudy Ba Fitzsimmons (?).

McMillindy: Worked out where?

Denaby: At [redacted] (Croll's) Gardens. They had a training facility there. They still use the name on the bar. In those days my dad had a fighter, Louis Longo (?), a good lightweight fighter. But he was another Stanley Ketche (?). He got caught in a farmer's bed with a farmer's wife. And the farmer shot him. (laughter) But he was a good fighter.

My father managed him. Of course all my othe uncles were around those characters. My othe Uncle Jerry was a great character. He was the "dime jig king" in Oakland. You know what the dime jigs are? Dime a dance in those days. That was a phenomenon in the '20s. Everybody went to the dime jigs. You bought a roll of tickets for a dime a piece and you got a dance with these gals. He knew all these characters, and the ball players. In those days a lot of the major league ball teams, back 1910, 1915, came out to California to train — the Pirates, the Chicago White Sox. In fact he was a very close friend with a numbe of the fellows on the famous Chicago Black Sox. They were a baseball team that threw a world series. The gamblers got to them, and they were all later banned from baseball. It was a very famous case. Eddie Sicott (?), Buck Weaver (?), and Shoeless Joe Jackson. They were great friends of my uncle. They used to come out here and always stop to see him. A lot of the fighters were around. Jack Kearns (?) was from Oakland., later Dempsey's manager. In fact that's where he picked him up here. He fought around for Tommy Simpson; had a boxing pavilion in West Oakland.

Morton: Where was that?

Denahy: That was torn down before I was born. I would say it was down around on 9th or 10th and Willow. Then later they had a place on 6th Street, where John Henry Lewis, later the light heavyweight champion; a colored fighter. Paul Lewis worked out. That was a little later in the '30s.

[redacted] minutes | 155-215 counter

Hughes: I've talked to several blacks about all the black sports figures in West Oakland. Did that have any effect on the color lines? Did people tend to accept blacks more?

Denahy: I would say no. No.

Hughes: One reason I ask is that a man who came to Oakland in the '40s, I believe, claims that all the clubs were closed to blacks except for Slim Jenkins Bar.

Denahy: Yes. I would say you'd never see a black come up to Silver Cafe, or any of the bars up on Broadway, in those days.

Hughes: Even Chinatown was closed to blacks, according to this man.

Denahy: I don't know about that. They didn't socialize. They might come up there and work around there, but they didn't socialize much in those days. You never saw that. None of that at all.

Hughes: Would whites go into Slim Jenkins Bar?

Denahy: Oh yes. That was the Harlem of Oakland. You went down there when you were slumming. You took the society girl. They generally had some type of Negro musician. That was kind of the big thing. In New York you went out to Harlem.

Hughes: Would this have been starting with the Depression?

Denahy: I would say Slim Jenkins dates from around the mid-thirties to the mid-fifties, or a little bit later.

Morton: But that was the only "black and tan club"?

Denahy: There was a couple others. There was a place, an old Irish family owned it. In fact some of

them are still alive. It would be interesting to interview the McAllisters. Old Frank is out at Our Ladies Home, out there on 34th. See if you can get a hold of Frank McAlliste. He was a typical old bachelor, kind of wealthy. His father was the plumber. They owned a lot of real estate on 7th Street. They owned "The House of Joy." I'll never forget the name of the bar. (laughter) That was a black bar down there. They owned the property. They rented it to some black operator. The McAlliste family. The sisters: Alice was a school teacher in Oakland and Ann married a very wealthy rancher out in Hayward; the Warrens. I think they're all still alive. They're older than I am, quite a bit.

McGillicuddy: You mentioned MacKenzie who was a superintendent and the fact that he had this masonic badge. I can remember growing up my father mentioning the masons. I never got any details out of him, but I always got the feeling that it was very negative.

Denahy: There was discrimination. Of course the Catholics couldn't become a mason. You were a Knights of the Columbus or you were a mason. The masons always kind of controlled the building trades to a certain extent. The contractors always had that.

McGillicuddy: I thought the Irish were contractors.

Denahy: At the lower levels. There was an unwritten law — there was never a police chief in Oakland unless he was a mason.

McGillicuddy: We were told by Father Connolly that Oakland was really a protestant town.

Denahy: John is from around 5th and Market. I know that family, too.

Mike Kelley was the only one who had any kind of influence that a Catholic could go and get some kind of political clout. There was an old fellow, Frank Lynch, an old West Oakland guy raised with our family. He was late a very famous captain of police here in Oakland; the epitome of the old policeman. But Frank knew he could never become chief.

McGillicuddy: What do you mean by "old policeman".

Denahy: When you went on the police force, you went before Cap. Lynch, and he told you what to do. If you fouled up, he told you how to be a policeman. He was the model policeman, untouchable. Nobody would bribe old Frank Lynch. The other guys in Chinatown, where the gambling was, they were taking dough. But you never touched old Frank Lynch. Some of the other chiefs were quite tarnished with graft, but not old Frank Lynch.

20-25 minutes | 215-275 counter

McGillicuddy: At home in the old country there is a lot of animosity between the protestants and the Catholics. Did you pick up on any of that when you were growing up?

Denahy: Well, no. We never had that. I was raised in a neighborhood where we were the minority, you could say, the kids that went to Catholic school. I was raised with Jewish kids and protestant kids. We never had that. . . . You pulled for Notre Dame and they pulled for S.M.U., or somethin' like that. In the old days when I was a kid St. Mary's and Cal was the big rivalry. Of course all the Catholic kids either went to Santa Clara or St. Mary's or U.S.F.

Hughes: While we're on the subject, something that I've picked up from other people is that there was tension in a

Hughes, cont: particular ethnic group between later arrivals who came and people who were already established.

Denahy: I wouldn't say it was anything severe, but if you were an older family you knew so-and-so longer. It was a little bit like that. But I wouldn't say it was anything out of the ordinary. I never felt dispossessed. Heck, we knew we were from West Oakland originally, our family. We moved up into, in those days, was considered a nice neighborhood.

McGillicuddy: I think what Kitty means is other Irish coming in later who might have been poorer.

Denahy: Oh — no, no, no! Very paternalistic. They sponsored them, got them jobs. A lot of those guys in those days, what we call "the narrowbacks", the late ones coming over from the old country, they went to work for the P.G. and E.

McGillicuddy: I thought it was the other way around. We always called the Americans the narrowbacks....

Denahy: No, no. The narrowbacks were the late arrivals from Ireland.

McGillicuddy: Their theory being after you work here for a while, you don't work so hard, and you don't get the big brawly back. You get the narrow back.

Denahy: I can remember if somebody came out here, they'd see if they could get 'em a job. They were always paternalistic.

McGillicuddy: Did it go by county?

Denahy: To a certain extent. I've heard tales — these go back to my grandfather's days — up here in Contra Costa County, Port Costa is an interesting old area, brick buildings and warehouses. Well, that was a wheat port. The sailing ships used to go up as far as Port Costa and they'd lighter (?) the wheat down on barges or somethin' from the Sacramento Valley. They'd load it, wheat and grain, they'd load it on the sailing ships. That was one of the first jobs, too, (when) the Irish came over here. You'd go to work on the docks of Port Costa. The docks up there were controlled by the Kerrymen.

Say Pat and Mike'd go to work, Pat would be a new hiree, ... [illegible], there was two men on the grain sack. They had these hundred pound grain sacks, two men on each sack, and they'd throw 'em. They'd say, "Where are you from Pat?" "Oh, I'm from _____ (sounds like Holland or Bowin?)." "_____, huh?" Mike would pick up the sack and carry it high, and you'd be on the low one and you'd get all the weight. That was called a "Kerry Lift." In a day it would kill you! In a day you'd have to quit the job. So if you weren't from Kerry, you didn't last. This goes way back to the early, early days. I've heard my grandmother tell about 'em, "We'd give that guy the Kerry Lift." That means that he would carry the sack up high and put all the weight on the other guy. So there were little things like that. Even today, around here, I get a lot of the fellows that are just over from the old country.

McGillicuddy: Do you still?

Denahy: There are some, sure. Between here and McNalley's, they kind of float, the Irish.

25-30 minutes | 275-340 counter

McGillicuddy: I would have thought they had headed for the avenues in the City.

Denahy: There are some over there, a few. There's a few Irish bars, like Mike Roche's and Knowlands. But there are still a lot over here. Of course the Kerry man is the Polock of Ireland. There are Kerry jokes. They always talk about, "Joe John did this, Joe John's a little slow, you know."

McGillicuddy: That's fairly recent though.

Denahy: In Ireland that's true. The butt of all the jokes in Ireland is the Kerryman.

McGillicuddy: You opened this bar, you opened the Kerry House?

Denahy: No, I bought this bar. I ran my dad's old bar from 1949 to '59. I bought this in 1959. This was an existing place.

McGillicuddy: Was it called the Kerry House then?

Denahy: No. It was called "Pinkies" in those days. I still own the

Denahy, cont: property down there. The bar is still operating, "Snug Harbor". But I have it leased out now to the same fellow for twenty years. The original building was torn down in 1950. I built a new building.

McKillicuddy: Why did you call this the Kerry House?

Denahy: Well, my family was from Kerry.

McKillicuddy: I know, but you're third generation.

Denahy: But this was kind of an Irish area.

McKillicuddy: Do you have a lot of nostalgic feelings about that, romantic feelings?

Denahy: Certainly. I've been to Ireland a number of times. I've travelled there quite extensively. My sister still has a mass said at the old O'Connell Church for the family over there.

McKillicuddy: This is at Derynon (?) that you're talking about?

Denahy: No, right in Carsaivin. Have you been in Carsaivin?

McKillicuddy: I was born over there. I left when I was seven, but then I went to London. But home was always (afar) (?).

Denahy: Are you familiar with Carsaivin?

McKillicuddy: After a while they built another church in Cardownell. Do you know Cardownell?

Denahy: No.

McKillicuddy: It was closer to the family, so we didn't have to go so (far).

Denahy: The old stone church right on the main drag is called the O'Connell. That's the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, a famous Irish patriot.

McKillicuddy: That's what Derynon is.

Denahy: The same really from there, yes, but that's kind of like a small town. The municipality would be called Carsaivin. . . .

McKillicuddy: I just find it amazing for somebody that was born over there, that a hundred, a hundred and fifty years have passed, and you still feel those ties.

Denahy: Oh, yeah. We always had those ties, those tales. Of course the Irish Americans never learned Gaelic. . . .

My grandfather and grandmother, she was from Galway, but some of the old Irish biddies (?) would come over and they'd talk Gaelic, or they'd sing these old Irish songs. He'd tell the stories about Daniel O'Connell. He was a member of parliament. That's when they were trying to reform the penal acts. He was at some big dinner in London, and they were going to poison him. The maid was a Kerry girl, and she spoke in Gaelic to him, "Don't drink the wine." There are all these old tales that came down from my grandfather.

McGillicuddy: Does this end with you, do you think? Has your son got any taste of this.

Denahy: I would doubt that he would have this background. My background is from the aunts and uncles. My kid knows a little bit about the background, but I would doubt if he would have as much.

McGillicuddy: Is he a professional person?

30-35 minutes | 340-410 counter

Denahy: He's a video editor in the t.v. industry. He's only twenty-three. I live down at Pebble Beach now, and he went to school down there. He used to work part time as a "gopher" for ABC on the sports. He originally started with the Crosby Tournament. He went to college down at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He kind of worked his way up. . . . He says, "Someday maybe I'll come back and go to work in the old family business."

McGillicuddy: Did you go to college?

Denahy: Yeah, I went to St. Mary's College.

McGillicuddy: Your father didn't go to college.

Denahy: No. My father went to the third grade. But that was typical of those old Irish families. He was sure that his two children went through college. My sister is a graduate of Berkeley.

McGillicuddy: Your family had two kids. So that large family tradition broke with your father.

Denahy: That's right.

McGillicuddy: Did economics . . .

Denahy: I don't think it had any play in it. It's a lifestyle that those old Irish families had. I don't know what it is. It's hard to say. I can go back to even the Irish families here — there was six or seven Irish kids in a family. One was a nun, one was a priest, one ran the old family business, on and on like that. But I think it's broken down. I married young. I was twenty-nine when I married! (laughter) I was the exception. My sister never married.

Hughes: Your father and grandfather both had their children late. Is that because they were working hard?

Denahy: That was part of it. You came over here, and you certainly couldn't afford a family when they first came over. But it was part of the culture. My uncle never married til late. He married quite late, and he never had any children. There was my Aunt Fan, she was a saintly old woman, she ran the house. So they didn't have to worry. Bill got up, and she'd cook breakfast for him. Jerry got up, and she'd cook breakfast for him. And washed the clothes. They had no reason to get married! (laughter) They had a pretty good go.

McCilliwddy: I asked a friend of mine, a young man actually, here from Derry, why — I just assumed he was married, and it turned out he wasn't — I asked him, "Why aren't you, you're a new generation, why are you waiting so long to marry?" He said, "Well, in a culture where you're raised to believe that marriage is forever, and there is no out ....."

Denahy: That's right. That was a factor. I can remember, even today, if you're a Catholic, the way the Church and Vatican II has changed over, priests leaving, I can remember if a priest left the order he was a "spiled priest." Lord, that was an anathma. Or some gal that became a sister and left the nunnery, something's wrong with her.

McCilliwddy: Do you think the Irish are more conservative than

other groups?

Denahy: Really — I believe it. If you look politically in this country .... if you take wherever the Irish have any political prominence, like in Tammany Hall (?) in New York, or certain Democratic politics in Boston, that's the only way they worked themselves up. Even today the most conservative democrats and the democratic party are really Irish. Teddy Kennedy is a finkaroo. He has no culture, no nothing background. He's a Machiavellan politician because he doesn't stand by those people in the South Side in Boston. They're conservatives, the "Southies". ... Really the Irish are basically conservative people.

35-40 minutes | 410-500 counter

McGillicuddy. Do you think they've changed at all recently as a group?

Denahy: Well .... they talk about clannishness. The Irish have never been that clannish. The Greeks are clannish. Their roots are really clannish. If the Italians come from a certain part of Italy they're clannish. But the Irish were never that clannish.

McGillicuddy: It seems with the Irish in America there's no middle road. You're either fiercely Catholic or you're an atheist.

Denahy: Yeah, that's right.

McGillicuddy: It seems to me with politics you're either arch conservative or stone radical. Like this guy Rooney that led the street car strike in San Francisco. And Peter Yourke, this very radical labor priest. And Mother Jones, for instance, who was extremely radical. If you look at some of the most radical labor leaders in the United States, ...

Denahy: I think that's out of context. They were fighting really for basic rights. Today if you epitomized somebody like George Meeney, would be the type. There's a typical Irish Catholic political. He epitomizes the majority of the thought. There's a few radicals, but

Denahy, cont: They're the minority.

Discussion of politics — John Kennedy a "turkey", too. Charismatic, but worthless politically. Denahy rates Harry Truman as best Democratic president we've had. Thinks Reagans alright. John Kennedy as democratic Gerry Ford. Kennedy a product of his dad's money. Bobby the greatest Kennedy of them all, because he had "Balls." Doesn't think that the fact that Kennedy was Irish-American had any effect in making the Irish-American at large more accepted or respected. Denahy's philosophy in life: those with talent and drive should be rewarded, regardless of color. Women's movement is overplayed. Women should be paid the same as a man if she's doing the same work. And today women are getting equal pay. Denahy doesn't like excessive feminism. Denahy doesn't believe in affirmative action. Things shouldn't be forced. A woman can't go into combat. Now, in other respects and in moderation, the doors are open for women. Denahy doesn't have anything against gays, except when they get too militant. It's fine as long as they don't bother kids. Gays come into the Kerry House. If they're not too obvious they're accepted.

40-45 minutes | 500-590 counter

McKilliwddy: What do you do for these young Irish that come over now? Do you find them work?

Denahy: Oh, yeah. There's a so-called network of guys. It's harder now. I can remember in the old days, you'd get them on the P.W. and E., but now you've got to be black. You don't have a chance for an Irish kid. But there's certain jobs for them.

McKilliwddy: Like what?

Denahy: A lot of them are into construction, which is age old trades for them. A lot of them are into sales now. You'd be surprised how many of these young kids have come over here and done very well.

45-47 minutes | 590-640

I must say, the kids that are coming over now, in this generation are better educated than the American kids. No question about it. . . . . If they've got it they're gonna get ahead.

McGillivaddy: Do they tend to stay within the Irish community?

Denahy: No, not really. I would say that five percent of my trade would be attributable to strictly ethnic Irish. There are a lot of Irish Americans, no question about that, but mine's a cross section.

Hughes: I was wondering if the fact your bar was here actually brought Irish into the area.

Denahy: A little bit, yes. They do live here. If they're single and they can find an apartment around here, there are a lot of them that way.

Hughes: You mentioned when you opened it, with you and McNalleys, there were Irish already here.

Denahy: Yeah. But McNalley on College Avenue, [redacted] (the owner now) is an Irish, born in Ireland, a kid by the name of Pat Birmingham. A super personality, nice fellow, too. He has a better connection with me than the real Irish colony, particularly like in San Francisco. He worked over there, he knows the (Hurley Teams)(?) — he'll go to see them. He's a fan of that stuff. So he's probably into it more than I would. McNalleys — it was mostly Irish American families that were here for quite a while. There was no cut and dry. Hell, you could be any nationality, and if you lived in the neighborhood and you liked the people around the bar, you're in the bar. It's not like say in Belfast where it's cut and dry.

End of Interview.